

detailed field searches for *T. obscura* in south-west Brazil during the austral winter to clarify its range and status in Brazil.

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A specimen of Cape Petrel *Daption capense* from north-east Brazil

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Cape Petrel *Daption capense* is a mid-sized procellariiform which breeds on subantarctic islands throughout the Southern Ocean, and the Antarctic Peninsula and continent (Harrison 1983, del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). On dispersal, which commences February–March, it regularly occurs north to *c.*25°S, and has reached Ecuador and Colombia, and even Mexico and northern California; in the Atlantic, it reaches Uruguay and Brazil, north to Rio de Janeiro (Harrison 1983, Sick 1997).

As part of ongoing research on seabirds off north-east Brazil, we located an old, and apparently overlooked, specimen of the species at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ), Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The bird (MCZ 226730, adult, sex unknown) was collected by George H. Mackay at Cabo de São Roque (05°29'S, 35°16'W), on the coast of Rio Grande do Norte, near the mouth of the Maxaranguape River (Paynter & Traylor 1991), on 9 June 1863. This record extends the species' range north more than 2,000 km in the western Atlantic (Blake 1977, Pinto 1978, Harrison 1983, Sick 1997, Vooren & Brusque 1999).

Measurements (mm) of the skin are: culmen 33; wing 262; tail 99 and tarsus 44. Plumage: upperparts with black mantle merging into white back and rump, both

broadly marked with black chevrons recalling a checkerboard; wings mostly black; and tail mostly black with white base. Given the plumage and morphometrics, the specimen is of nominate *D. c. capense*, which breeds on subantarctic islands in the western hemisphere (e.g. South Georgia and the South Shetlands), the Antarctic Peninsula and continent (Harrison 1983, del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). The other subspecies, *D. c. australe* breeds at the Snares, Antipodes, Bounty and Campbell islands, off New Zealand, and is smaller and has more white on the upperparts (Harrison 1983). For a comparison of the plumages of these taxa see Fig. 1.

How could a southern polar procellariiform reach the warm waters of north-east Brazil? During the austral winter, many birds from the Southern Ocean undertake regular northward movements along the Brazilian coast to *c.*22°S, mainly occurring at rich upwelling areas like those of the Cabo Frio region, Rio de Janeiro, or high-productivity areas in south and central São Paulo (Olmos *et al.* 1995, Sick 1997). More rarely, some reach waters off north-east and north Brazil. For instance, White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* and Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta* have been recorded at the mouth of the Amazon (Novaes 1959, Teixeira *et al.* 1996), Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebetria palpebrata* in coastal Bahia (Sampaio & Castro 1998), and Snowy Sheathbill *Chionis albus* in Pernambuco (Telino Júnior *et al.* 2001). Strong winds associated with cold fronts originating in

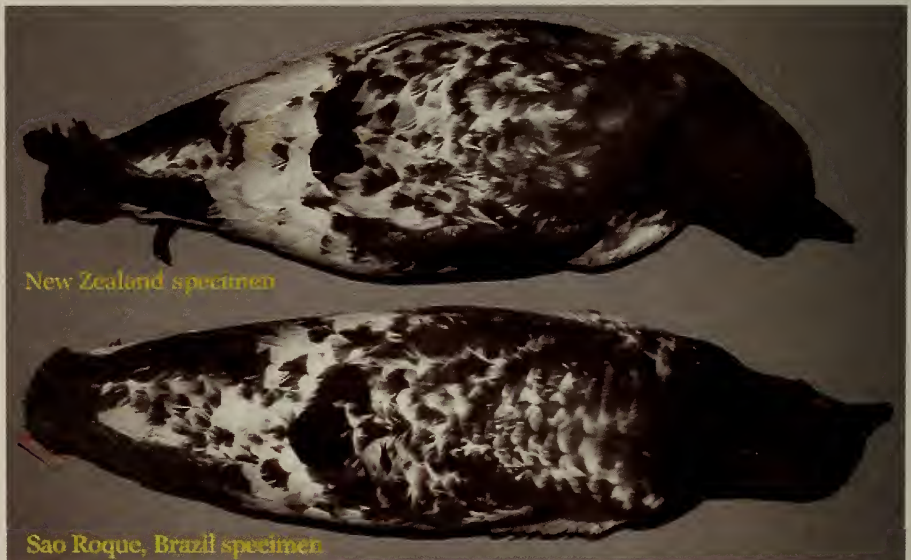


Figure 1. Cape Petrel *Daption capense capense* specimen from Cabo de São Roque (MCZ 226730), Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, and a specimen of *D. c. australe* from the Snares Islands, New Zealand (MCZ 300895) (Jeremiah Trimble)

Antarctica may be important in explaining the apparently anomalous occurrence of such birds north to the equator.

The appearance of Southern Ocean birds in north-east Brazil, a region dominated by sandy beach coasts where the sea is generally nutrient-poor, may be linked to the high outflow of nutrients from such mainland ecosystems as large estuaries and associated mangrove swamps, e.g. in the Canal de Santa Cruz estuarine complex, Pernambuco, and the mouth of the São Francisco River, Alagoas (Azevedo Júnior 1998, Souza 1993). Thus, the region of Cabo de São Roque, which is only c.3 km north of the mouth of the Maxaranguape River, may constitute a relatively productive area, permitting the occurrence of subantarctic birds such as Cape Petrel and Southern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialisoides*, the latter confirmed by three skins at MCZ (186306, 186307, 226729, all taken, on 9 June 1863, at Cabo de São Roque, and collected by George H. Mackay).

Finally, it must be stressed that there are few studies on the distribution of seabirds off north-east Brazil. Antas (1991) noted that ornithologists interested in seabirds are mainly resident in southern Brazil. Future surveys will probably reveal that southern migrants are more common in the region than previously supposed.

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***Motacilla samveasnae* is the correct scientific name for the Mekong Wagtail**

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The Mekong Wagtail *Motacilla samveasnae* was described recently (Duckworth *et al.* 2001). The spelling of its name was questioned by van Rootselaar (2002), who stated that 'Following the nomenclatural rules of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature...and considering that the species' name was 'formed directly from a modern personal name' and that 'the name is to be formed by adding to the stem of that name -i if the personal name is that of a man', the Mekong Wagtail's scientific name should perhaps be cited as '*Motacilla samveasnai* Duckworth *et al.* 2001', instead of '*Motacilla samveasnae*'. This proposal is not correct, and would lead to confusion if adopted.

The *International code of zoological nomenclature*, fourth edn (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1999) governs the formation and usage of all names proposed on or after 1 January 2000. Article 31.1.1 states that 'A species group name, if a noun in the genitive case formed from a personal name that is Latin, or from a modern personal name that is or has been Latinized, is to be